ON CONFIRMATION.

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FIRST,

CONFIRMATION;

SECOND,

OF THE CHURCH;

THIRD,

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

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CONFIRMATION.

1. What is Confirmation?—*Ans.* One of the appointed means of grace in the Christian Church.

2. What grace is conveyed in it?—*A.* When rightly received, it assures and seals those who have been baptized, imparting to them an increase of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

3. In what respects does it differ from a sacrament? *A.* First, Because it has no outward visible sign. Secondly, The Scriptures do not say that it was ordained of Christ himself.

4. By whom then was it ordained?—*A.* the first mention in Scripture is, that it was practised by the Apostles.

5. In what does it consist?—*A.* In the laying on of hands, accompanied with prayer, by the chief pastors of the church.

6. But did not miraculous effects frequently follow from the exercise of this rite by the first Apostles?—*A.* They did so.

7. How then do we know that it was a rite to be continued in the church, when miracles had ceased? *A.* St. Paul speaks of it as one of the foundation principles of Christianity, which cannot be supposed to be temporary.—Heb. vi. 2.

8. Does he speak of it on occasions when we have reason to suppose miraculous effects did not follow? *A.* Yes! He speaks of it in reference to the whole church at Ephesus; and we have reason to conclude

from what he says, (1 Cor. xii. 29,) that all the members of a church, even at that time, were not endowed with miraculous gifts.

9. Repeat the passage to which you refer?—*A.* "In the which, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."—Ephes. i. 12.

10. Why do you suppose that by the word "sealed," he here alludes to confirmation?—*A.* Because it is the word used to express it in the primitive church.

11. Have we undoubted evidence that this rite was retained in the church after the death of the Apostles? *A.* The clearest and most convincing. The universal prevalency of it was such that St. Jerome, speaking of this ordinance, says, "do you demand where we find our authority for it? I answer, in the Acts of the Apostles. But although we could produce no positive authority of Scripture, yet the consent or practice of the whole world, in this respect, would have the force of a command."

12. What is to be thought of such persons as affect to despise this rite, and refuse to receive it?—*A.* They dishonour the ordinances of the Holy Spirit; disturb the order of the church; they shew disrespect to the spiritual rulers; and are forgetful of the example of their Lord, who, when he persisted to receive the baptism of John, said "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

13. What injury do they suffer hereby?—*A.* They deprive themselves of the grace and blessing which they might have received; and they render themselves inadmissible to the Holy Eucharist.

14. What blessing may those look for who rightly receive this holy ordinance?—*A.* An increase of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as I said before.

15. Do they thereby become entitled to any new privilege?—*A.* Yes; to the communion of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, to which persons unconfirmed are not admitted.

16. Do they thereby become engaged to any new duty?—*A.* Yes; to the duty of partaking in the Holy Eucharist, the highest and most essential act of religious worship, and the chief means of grace.

17. Is confirmation necessary for those who have been baptized when grown up, as well as for those who received infant baptism?—*A.* It was so administered by the Apostles; and has ever been required by the Christian church.

18. What is required of them who would rightly receive this ordinance?—*A.* Repentance and Faith.

19. What do you mean by repentance?—*A.* A conviction of past sin, and a desire for forgiveness: a fear of sin for the time to come, and a desire to overcome and escape it.

20. What do you mean by faith?—*A.* Belief that the pardon and assisting grace which we thus need, has been purchased for us by the death of the Son of God, and may be obtained by those who will seek them in the appointed means.

21. How are these dispositions ordinarily produced in the mind?—*A.* By instruction drawn from the word of God.

22. Is any thing more required of those who have been baptized in infancy?—*A.* Yes; that they openly engage to fulfil the duties required of them by the Christian covenant, to which they were then unconciously admitted.

23. What are those duties?—*A.* First, to avoid all sin, and everything which is displeasing to God, whether suggested by the *devil*, or the wishes of the *body*, or the love of the *world*. Secondly, to believe all God's declarations to men, as contained in his holy word, especially his gracious promise of pardon for what is past, and assisting grace for the time to come, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to those who will seek for these graces in his appointed ways. Thirdly, to obey all God's commandments, and to discharge the duties to God and man which are therein set forth.

24. Can a man perform these things?—*A.* He can do none of them by his own strength, but by the help of the Holy Ghost he can do them so as to please God, and find acceptance before him through Jesus Christ.

25. How is the help of the Holy Spirit to be obtained? *A.* Chiefly by partaking in the Holy Eucharist; but in subordination to that, by private and public prayer, and devout meditation on sacred things, and the practice of piety and charity, and the reading and hearing God's holy word, and the advices drawn from it.

26. Are you then resolved to endeavour to perform what is required of you, and to seek in the ways just mentioned for the assistance of the Holy Ghost, that you may be able to do your duty?—*A.* I am so resolved, and have thus determined, with the help of God.

PRAYER FOR ONE ABOUT TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, who calledst me in baptism, and receivedst me for thine own child, by adoption and grace; perfect, I beseech thee, the good work which thou hast begun in me: dispose me in this holy ordinance to receive thy Heavenly favour, and seal to me thy mercy by an increase of thy Holy Spirit; that with his mighty aid, I may do what of myself I cannot—avoid sin, and keep thy commandments: that the thoughts of my heart, and the words of my lips, and my outward actions, may be acceptable in thy sight: that I may be worthy to partake in the communion of the body and blood of thy Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Eucharist; that I may walk in thy fear, and in the belief and hope of thy mercy all the days of my life, and at length be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the [illegible]us Christ, our Lord, to whom, with thee and [illegible] Ghost, be honour and glory, dominion and [illegible]henceforth and for ever. Amen.

A PRAYER AFTER CONFIRMATION.

O GOD, I beseech thee, to direct, sanctify and confirm, my Soul, by the gracious influences of thy Holy Spirit, in the true Christian belief and obedience of thy Gospel, that I may be enabled to confirm and to keep all my holy resolutions of a pious and Godly life: and grant that I may serve Thee and worship Thee so faithfully here upon earth, that I may obtain pardon and peace, present comfort and everlasting happiness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Saviour. Amen.

OF THE CHURCH.

1. What is the Holy Catholic Church?—*A.* All the faithful under one head, Jesus Christ.—Eph. 2, xx. xxi. 1 Cor. 1. ii.

2. Why is the Church called Holy?—*A.* Because its Doctrines and Sacraments are holy, and its members being united in Christ, ought all to be holy.

3. Why is the Church called Catholic?—*A.* Because she is universal, and extends to all times, and throughout all places.

4. What means Apostolic?—*A.* It means that the Church preserves the Doctrine of the Apostles, and that its Pastors are the Successors of the Apostles.

5. What are the external signs or characters of the Church?—*A.* A regular Christian Ministry, and the two Sacraments which Christ hath ordained.

6. What constitutes a member of the visible Church? *A.* The Sacrament of Baptism, and a profession of Faith in the Gospel of Christ.

7. What is the Gospel?—*A.* Luke 2. x.

8. What is the design and influence of the Gospel Ministry?—*A.* Acts 26. xviii.

9. What is meant by the Communion of Saints?—*A.* That in the Church of God there is a Communion of all holy persons in all holy things, and that the Saints departed, and the Saints on earth, constitute one family, which is named of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 3. xv.

10. What is meant by forgiveness of sins?—*A.* That whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ and is baptised in His name, shall receive remission of sin. Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sin.—Acts 10. xliii. & 22. xvi.

11. To whom hath Christ given power to declare the forgiveness of sins?—*A.* To His Apostles and their Successors.—John 20. xxiii.

12. To whom is the declaration of forgiveness made? *A.* To all who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel.

13. On whose account are we raised from the dead, and enjoy life everlasting?—*A.* On Christ's alone. John 11. xxv. xxvi.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. What order of Government did the Church assume before the Law given by Moses?—*A.* It appears from Scripture, that every Patriarch was both Priest and King in his own house. Gen. 8. xx. and 15. ix. Job. 42. viii.

2. What was the order of the Church under the Law?—*A.* It consisted of the three-fold order of the High Priest, the Priests and the Levites.

3. What was the order of the Church when our Blessed Saviour was upon Earth?—*A.* It preserved this three fold distinction: our Lord Jesus Christ himself as the great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, constituted the two inferior orders of the twelve

Apostles and the seventy Disciples. Mark 3. xiv. &c. Luke 6. xiii. Luke 10. ii. &c.

4. What was the order of the Church after our Blessed Lord's ascension into Heaven?—*A.* The Apostles succeeded as Bishops of the Christian Church, and ordained, subordinate to them, the Priests and Deacons. Titus 1. v. 1 Tim. 3. i. & 1 Tim. 5. xxii.

5. Was this order generally received in the primitive Church?—*A.* The three fold distinction of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, was then universally acknowledged; nor was it ever called in question for one thousand five hundred years after the time of Christ.

6. How do you prove that this order should be now observed in the Church?—*A.* It may be inferred from the general aspect of the new Testament, and it is most plainly asserted by the earliest writers. The Angels presiding over the seven Churches addressed in the Revelations, were all exercising the Episcopal Office—Rev. 2 and 3 Chaps. St. James presided as Bishop over the Church of Jerusalem when it consisted of more than ten thousand persons, who could not therefore all meet for public worship under one roof.—Timothy and Titus had Episcopal authority over the Elders and Presbyters of Ephesus and Crete, as appears from the whole tenor of St. Paul's Epistles to them. Acts 12. xvii. and 21. xviii. xxvi. 1 Tim. 5. i. 2 Tim. 4. ii. *Titus passim.*

7. What early writers advance this position?—*A.* St. Clement, who is mentioned by St. Paul—St. Ignatius, who was Bishop of Antioch in the life time of

the Apostle Tertullian, Cyprian, and all the Fathers. St. Jerome observes—"what Aaron, his Sons and the Levites were in the Temple, that the Bishops, the Priests and the Deacons, claim to be in the Church."

8. What is the appropriate office of a Christian Bishop?—*A.* The Ordaining of Christian Ministers; Confirming baptised persons; and the jurisdiction or government of the Church, and Consecrating places for public worship.

9. What is the Priest's Office?—*A.* To govern the people committed to his charge; to administer Baptism and the Holy Communion; and to perform other holy offices.

10. What is the Office of a Deacon?—*A.* To assist the Priest in Divine Service; to Catechise; to Preach, and Baptise infants; and administer to the necessities of the poor.

11. Has any private Christian a right to take upon himself the Ministerial office?—*A.* No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Heb. 5. iv.

12. But if a man conceives himself inwardly called, does not that supersede the necessity of other authority?—*A.* By no means; for even Christ himself, in whom the spirit dwelt without measure, glorified not himself to be made a High Priest.—Heb. 5. v. Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, was ordained by the imposition of hands of St. Paul and the Presbytery, and is himself charged to lay hands suddenly on no man.—1 Tim. 4. xiv. 1 Tim. 5. xxii. and 2 Tim. 1. vi.

13. What respect and obedience are due to the governors of the Christian Church?—*A.* Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.—Heb. 13. xvii.

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